



BHS A.S.S.I.S.T. Spotlight

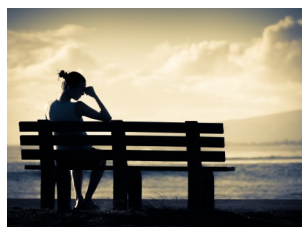
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Your EAP is a free and confidential service, which provides assessment and short-term counseling for a variety of mental health, substance abuse and work/life related issues. To learn more about your available benefits, contact your BHS Care Coordinator at 800.245.1150.



The Relationship
Between Sleep &
Mental Health

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Depression and Women:
What Is Depression?

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Think Positively, Live
Positively

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Recipe: Spinach &
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The Complex Relationship Between Sleep & Mental Health

Excessive sleepiness not only affects your physical health, it has a big impact on your mental health as well. When you don't get the 7-9 hours of quality sleep you need, it can heavily influence your outlook on life, energy level, motivation and emotions.

If you're feeling low, you may not realize that lack of sleep is the culprit. But even small levels of sleep deprivation over time can chip away at your happiness. You might see that you're less enthusiastic, more irritable, or even have some of the symptoms of clinical depression, such as feeling persistently sad or empty. All these alterations to your mood can affect not only your individual mental health, but your relationships and family dynamics as well.

The link between sleep and mood has been seen over and over by researchers and doctors. For example, people with insomnia have greater levels of depression and anxiety than those who sleep normally. They are 10 times as likely to have clinical depression and 17 times as likely to have clinical anxiety. The more a person experiences insomnia and the more frequently they wake at night as a result, the higher the chances of developing depression.

Obstructive sleep apnea, a condition in which a person wakes frequently and very briefly throughout the night, is linked to depression as well.

In one study of nearly 19,000 people, those with obstructive sleep apnea were five times as likely to suffer from clinical depression. Researchers believe this is because when sleep is disrupted over and over, it can alter brain activity and neurochemicals that affect a person's mood and thinking.

The relationship between sleep and mood is complex, because disrupted sleep can lead to emotional changes, clinical depression or anxiety (as well as other psychiatric conditions), but these conditions can also compound or further disrupt sleep. In fact, altered sleep patterns are a hallmark of many mental health issues. If you find yourself sleeping too little or too much on a regular basis, it's important to bring this up with your doctor so the two of you can look at your total physical and mental health picture and decide if further tests or a treatment plan is necessary.



If you are concerned about your mental health, don't hesitate to seek advice. Call your BHS Care Coordinator for confidential assistance at 800-245-1150.

Source: SleepFoundation.org



Depression and Women: What Is Depression?

Everyone occasionally feels blue or sad, but these feelings usually pass within a couple of days. When a woman has a depressive disorder, it interferes with daily life and normal functioning, and causes pain for both the woman with the disorder and those who care about her. Depression is a common but serious illness, and most who have it need treatment to get better.

Depression affects both men and women, but more women than men are likely to be diagnosed with depression in any given year. Efforts to explain this difference are ongoing, as researchers explore certain factors that are unique to women. Many women with a depressive illness never seek treatment. But the vast majority, even those with the most severe depression, can get better with treatment.

There are several forms of depressive disorders that occur in both women and men. The most common are *major depressive disorder* and *dysthymic disorder*. *Minor depression* is also common.

Major depressive disorder, also called *major depression*, is characterized by a combination of symptoms that interfere with a person's ability to work, sleep, study, eat, and enjoy once pleasurable activities. Major depression is disabling and prevents a person from functioning normally. An episode of major depression may occur only once in a person's lifetime, but more often, it recurs throughout a person's life.

Dysthymic disorder, also called dysthymia, is characterized by depressive symptoms that are long term (two years or longer), but less severe than those of major depression.

Minor depression may also occur. Symptoms of minor depression are similar to major depression and dysthymia, but they are less severe and are usually shorter term.

Some forms of depressive disorder have slightly different characteristics than those described above, or they may develop under unique circumstances. They include the following.

- **Psychotic depression** occurs when a severe depressive illness is accompanied by some form of psychosis.
- **Seasonal affective disorder (SAD)** is characterized by a depressive illness during the winter months, when there is less natural sunlight. The depression generally lifts during spring and summer, with light therapy. Antidepressant medication and psychotherapy also can reduce SAD symptoms, either alone or in combination with light therapy.

If you are dealing with depression, don't hesitate to seek advice. Call your BHS Care Coordinator for confidential assistance at 800-245-1150.



Think Positively, Live Positively

Positive thinking can be harder than it seems. Most of us let "reality" squash our career dreams before they've even had a chance to develop. You think of how nice it would be to go for your Master's degree, but before you can even envision yourself in a cap and gown, you come up with a million reasons why you can't do it. Instead of listing all the reasons you can't do something, just this once, list all the reasons you can, and should. Maybe this degree will increase earning potential or open up exciting new career options. Maybe it'll help you to feel better about yourself.

Positive thinking takes practice. We all have negative thoughts from time to time, but it's possible to turn your negative thoughts into positive ones by following these simple guidelines:

Identify your negative thoughts. Negative ideas can spring into your mind so fast and so often that you are hardly even aware of them anymore. Consider the last dream or idea you rejected. Maybe you thought about asking for a new assignment at work. Write down all the excuses and problems you came up with to reject the idea. For example, perhaps you didn't ask for the new assignment because you'd never done anything similar before, or didn't know if you could handle the extra workload.

Weigh each excuse for validity. Take each item on the list and think through whether they are really obstacles that could block you from achieving your goals—or just excuses based on fear or procrastination. In the example above, not having enough experience could potentially keep you from getting the assignment. But fears about

handling the extra workload will not prevent you from getting the assignment. Let's face it: they are simply excuses not to go for what you want.

Think of ways to overcome your obstacles. So you don't quite have the experience to take on the project. How can you overcome this? Maybe you are willing to cooperate with a coworker who does have the experience, so you can learn what you will need to know on this project and you can work independently the next time. Or maybe you can take on a smaller project until you build up to the one you want. If your dream assignment has gone to someone else, try to develop a few main reasons why that person had the advantage over you. Perhaps, there are areas for you to focus on going forward to improve your chances for the next opening.

Reclaim your dreams. Once you have successfully broken down all your excuses, re-imagine the dream. Is it still a dream that fits? Are you still interested in the assignment? If so, it's yours for the taking.

EASY RECIPE: Spinach & Prosciutto Frittata Muffins

- 6 large eggs
- 1/2 cup milk
- 3/4 cup soft goat cheese, crumbled
- 5 oz. baby spinach, wilted and chopped
- 1/2 cup roasted red pepper, dice 2 oz. prosciutto, sliced
- Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Spray 12-cup muffin pan with nonstick cooking spray.
- In large bowl, beat eggs, milk, 1/4 teaspoon salt and 1/8 teaspoon black pepper. Stir in cheese, spinach and roasted red pepper.
- Divide batter among muffin-pan cups (about 1/4 cup each), top with prosciutto and bake 20 to 25 minutes.